

# UKHSA Advisory Board

**Title of paper** UKHSA Advisory Board - Effectiveness Review 2022-2023  
**Date** Wednesday 19 July 2023  
**Presenter** Ian Peters

## 1. Purpose of the paper

1.1 The purpose of the paper is to present the results of the UKHSA Advisory Board Effectiveness Review for 2022/23 and proposed recommendations for implementation in 2023/24.

## 2. Recommendation

2.1 The Advisory Board is asked to:

- a) **COMMENT** on the findings of UKHSA Advisory Board Effectiveness Review; and
- b) **AGREE** the proposed recommendations for implementation during 2023/24.

## 3. Background - Advisory Board

3.1 The Advisory Board was established in 2022 and its first meeting in public took place in September 2022. The terms of reference were developed in line with the governance arrangements as set out in the Framework Agreement with the Department of Health and Social Care (DHSC). As set out in its Terms of Reference the Advisory Board provide advice, challenge and support to the Chief Executive and Executive team on the development and delivery of UKHSA's priorities.

3.2 Ian Peters was appointed as non-executive chair of the Advisory Board in April 2021. The non-executive members of the Advisory Board were appointed in April 2022 with Cindy Rampersaud joining in April 2023 as permanent Audit and Risk Committee Chair.

3.3 The Advisory Board receives standing reports from the Chief Executive, finance and its committees at every meeting. In addition, specific issues that were considered by the Advisory Board in 2022/23 included:

- the development of UKHSA's strategy;
- the development of UKHSA's people strategy;
- UKHSA's role in the Commonwealth Games public health response;
- the development of UKHSA's science strategy;
- the development of UKHSA's data strategy;
- UKHSA's local, national and international relationships;
- preparedness for health threats from infectious disease;

- the development of UKHSA's global strategy;
- the implementation of the people delivery plan;
- UKHSA's workforce;
- preparedness for chemical, radiological and nuclear threats;
- UKHSA achievements for 2022/23.

- 3.4 The work of the Advisory Board is supported by four committees:
- a) Audit and Risk Committee (Chair – Cindy Rampersaud)
  - b) Equalities, Ethics and Communities (Chair – Graham Hart)
  - c) People and Culture (Chair – Sir Gordon Messenger)
  - d) Science and Research (Chair – Jon Friedland)

#### **4. Effectiveness Review Findings**

- 4.1 An online survey was shared with members of the Advisory Board and additional short online surveys with members of each committee, a summary of the results is provided at annexe A. A 360-feedback exercise on the Chair, Ian Peters, was also undertaken by Dr. Jennifer Dixon on behalf of the Advisory Board. This was fed back to the Senior Departmental Sponsor as part of the Chair's annual appraisal process, and some of the themes have also informed this work.
- 4.2 Ian Peters held a discussion with the Executive Committee on the key findings, and the points raised in the discussion are also reflected in the findings and recommendations.
- 4.3 There was a broad consistency of views with divergence in some areas.
- 4.4 Positive feedback included:
- a) all members felt that they could contribute fully and independently;
  - b) the relationship between the Advisory Board and committees worked well, and helped by cross-membership across the Advisory Board and its committees;
  - c) the dynamic between the non-executives and executive was positive and constructive;
  - d) meetings were well structured and chaired, with good quality papers, allowing for sufficient consideration of complex issues;
  - e) the non-executives brought diverse expertise and wider perspectives from a range of sectors; and
  - f) the executive pro-actively engaged with non-executives in the development of strategies in different areas.
- 4.5 Consistent throughout the feedback was the recognition that 2022-23 had not only been a developmental year for the Advisory Board and its committees but also that it had been operating in the most challenging of circumstance for the organisation due to high levels of volatility, including significant workforce ramp down, the move to its future operating model, and the uncertainty over medium-term funding.

**5. Detailed findings and recommendations**

5.1 The following areas for future development were identified:

**5.2 Constructive Challenge**

While there was broad agreement that the Advisory Board provides adequate strategic advice and support to the executive, more constructive challenge and direct questioning from non-executive colleagues would be welcomed to effectively use their range of expertise in helping UKHSA fully realise its ambitions. This also included consideration of UKHSA's performance by the Advisory Board and how non-executives could most appropriately provide support and challenge in this respect and provide external perspectives to support UKHSA's development.

5.3 As the Advisory Board is not fiduciary, it was recognised that this finding could be addressed both through the formal meetings, where appropriate, but also by more informal discussion and personal support and coaching, with the agreement of both the executive and non-executives.

5.4 Recommendation 1: To hold a number of informal Board workshops with voluntary attendance to engage on specific strategic topics e.g leadership development, pandemic preparedness, artificial intelligence, horizon scanning. The exact format to be agreed, for example either through one-to-one or smaller group discussions. Some non-executive colleagues may be available to be commissioned on specific topics at the instigation of members of the executive. Non Executives time availability is acknowledged to be a limiting factor.  
**Action:** Executive to propose and UKHSA Governance team to facilitate

5.5 Recommendation 2: The executive to consider inviting non-executive colleagues' for thoughts on aspects organisational performance on a case-by-case basis and where appropriate.  
**Action:** Executive Committee lead with UKHSA Governance team to facilitate

5.6 Discussion 1: In line with the Advisory Board's role of advising on effective leadership, informal coaching sessions with non-executive members would be welcomed, dependent on relevant experience and availability if requested by some of the executive.  
**Action:** UKHSA Governance team to facilitate

**5.7 Topic Management**

While agendas of the Advisory Board and its committees covered most matters within their terms of reference, there were some areas that required deeper review and long-term planning for future meetings in either committee or the Board.

5.8 For example, the Equalities, Ethics and Communities Committee findings highlighted that committee members wished to cover ethics. This was considered as a topic in the April 2023 meeting and would be scheduled on the forward look in future.

- 5.9 Similarly for the Audit and Risk Committee (ARC), more focus was suggested on risk quantification, risk management, risk appetite, fraud risks, and evaluating the effectiveness of the mitigations and control with risk owners. This will also support the ARC in providing sufficient challenge to the executive. Further detail on the Audit and Risk Committee specific recommendations are set out in enclosure AB/23/044.
- 5.10 Recommendation 3: The Governance team to ensure that all matters within the terms of reference are covered throughout the reporting period by developing a robust long-term and aligned forward look across the Advisory Board and its committees.  
**Action:** UKSHA Governance team
- 5.11 **Timing of discussions**  
Responses suggested that the Advisory Board be leveraged more at the early stages of developing work to help shape approach rather than only critiquing those that are nearing completion. Timing of engagement would be important to maximise the non-executives' skills, expertise, and perspectives in shaping and developing plans and work programmes. If adopting this approach, it was recognised that early ideas would need to be thought out in sufficient detail for the non-executives' interventions to be effective.
- 5.12 Recommendation 4: To ensure non-executives are best utilised to shape, adjust, course correct strategic pieces of work, the governance team will ensure agendas are set in advance enabling core pieces of work and strategic plans to be considered at different stages of development, and key governance milestones throughout the year. Some principles to support colleagues on the most appropriate time to involve the Advisory Board will also be developed by the Governance team.  
**Action:** Chair, Chief Executive and Head of Governance
- 5.13 **Supporting the talent pipeline**  
To ensure that the Advisory Board had access to a broad and representative range of input and to help with individual development, it was proposed that the Executive Committee support those colleagues who are earlier in their career through presenting to or attending the Advisory Board.
- 5.14 Recommendation 5: To ensure that the Advisory Board and its committees considers a range of perspectives and have exposure to future leaders, invite colleagues outside of core membership to participate on specific topics.  
**Action:** Governance team to facilitate with the input of Executive Committee members.
- 5.15 **External Partnerships**  
The feedback highlighted that there was more to do to consider how UKHSA is viewed by partners, including end-users, local and central government, academia and private sector. Additionally, that focus is needed on sharing of intelligence and co-creation of strategy, and evaluation of these working relationships. Building external relationships is critical for UKHSA to achieve its mission.

5.16 Discussion 2: With the organisation moving from the foundation stage towards maturity, on an entirely voluntary basis non-executives to play an occasional ambassadorial role with external organisations which are critical to UKHSA's success. This would be subject to their time availability, willingness and relevant experience. The Executive Committee will provide guidance on where best to focus.

**Action:** Director General, Strategy, Policy and Programmes

5.17 **Advisory Board ways of working**

The findings also set out a number of practical points which would support the more effective operation of the Advisory Board and its committees in the coming year. The proposed recommendations arising from these include:

5.18 Recommendation 6: that papers from the Advisory Board Committees be made available to all members of the Advisory Board so they have access to the materials if they wish.

**Action:** Governance team

5.19 Recommendation 7: A software application be implemented to share Advisory Board papers in a secure and easy to access way for meetings of the Advisory Board and its Committees. This is expected to be in place for September 2023.

**Action:** Governance team

5.20 Recommendation 8: Meetings with the chair and non-executives only be arranged twice per year or more frequently if required.

**Action:** Executive Assistant to Chair

5.21 Recommendation 9: That the Board are given the opportunity to build on their early visit to Porton Down by visiting UKHSA's key operational facilities over the next period e.g Colindale, Chilton.

5.22 Recommendation 10: That the current role of the Chair be clarified to Executive Committee given the considerable planned evolution since his appointment in 2021. This was completed at an Executive Committee meeting on 9th June.

**6. Next Steps**

6.1 Following Board discussion the agreed changes will be developed into an action plan and updates on progress will be reviewed in 6 months. Discussions will be held in each Committee to cover details and suggested actions of their individual survey.

6.2 Looking ahead, UKHSA should be in a period of relative stability enabling the evolution of the Board and committees towards maturity and improved alignment.



Annexe A

